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## **9/11/01, Looking Back, by Gov. Dennis Daugaard**

This week, almost every American will pause to remember Sept. 11, 2001. We recall where we were and what we were doing when the first planes struck the World Trade Center towers. We remember seeing the shocking events unfold on television, and watching in stunned disbelief as the first tower collapsed – and then the second.

We remember learning about terrorists who also attacked the Pentagon with a third plane, and hearing about passengers who bravely resolved “Let’s roll” and foiled the attack by a fourth plane terrorists had commandeered.

The events of 9/11 are branded in our collective memories. The anniversary resurrects a pain that binds us together. Thousands of innocent citizens were murdered, and the attacks had a widespread effect on our nation – an effect that remains with us still today.

In the days and weeks afterward, a resurgence in patriotism took place. Demand for American flags outpaced supply. The Sioux Falls Argus Leader published a full-page, full-color American flag, and my 85-year-old father cut it out and taped it to his farmhouse window, facing outward. Even the most jaded among us no longer scoffed at patriotism. We were angry at the injustice of this crime against our nation. We drew together in the face of a common threat.

Weeks after the events of Sept. 11, 2001, my wife, Linda, came upon a disposable camera that had been left in a drawer at home. She didn’t remember its origin or where the pictures were taken, but Linda had the film developed. When the prints came back, we remembered. Three months earlier, Linda and I had taken our three children on a vacation trip, including a few days in New York City. Among pictures of Times Square, the Statue of Liberty, and Ellis Island, was a photograph Linda took of me and our three children on the viewing deck at the top of the World Trade Center.

Looking at those pictures made me realize how innocent we were. On that fateful Sept. 11, 2001, there were no tourists on the viewing deck because it had not yet opened when the tower was attacked. Still, the photograph was a reminder of all the innocent lives taken by the terrorists who attacked us that day – from workers in the towers, to first responders who died in the collapses, to military personnel at the Pentagon, to those brave souls in United Airlines Flight 93.

Our family’s photos from the World Trade Center remind us of much more, too. They remind us of a time when our nation came together to hurt, to grieve, and to heal. As we face grave challenges in our nation, we should all remember the sense of purpose and patriotism we felt in

the days after 9/11. That is the most fitting way to honor the memory of those who lost their lives on that day.